



**Wisdom Park**  
Resource Center

# The Middle Way In A Stressful World


Speaker: Bro. Billy Tan

Living in a fast-paced and stressful world, cultivate the Middle Way to experience contentment & happiness, and connect with inner peace and tranquility.



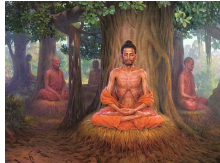
## THE MIDDLE WAY

**Kāmesu-kāma-sukhallikā-nuyoga**  
**INDULGENCE IN SENSUAL PLEASURES**  
Expression Of Emotional Excitement  
By Releasing Tensions in Action



THE TWO EXTREMITIES

**Atta-kilamathā-nuyoga**  
**SELF-TORMENT & SELF-MORTIFICATION**  
Suppression Of Emotional Urges  
By With-holding all Tensions



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THE MIDDLE WAY

Page 2

**THE MIDDLE WAY**

**Emotional Reaction To Sensual Feelings**

**THE MIDDLE WAY**

**Effort To Forcibly Restrain Emotions**

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**THE MIDDLE WAY**


**Emotional Reaction To Sensual Feelings**

**THE MIDDLE WAY**


**Effort To Forcibly Restrain Emotions**

Conscious Relaxation,  
Introspective Attention,  
Mental Equilibrium.  
**SUBLIME EIGHTFOLD WAY**


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## THE MIDDLE WAY



❖ **Conscious Relaxation**  
(consciously release tensions, relax the body, and calm the mind with mindful breathing)




❖ **Introspective Attention**  
(gently bring attention inwards to observe bodily and mental activities)




❖ **Mental Equilibrium**  
(compose and still the mind, free from emotional arousals and excitement)

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## THE TWO EXTREMETIES




- I. The pursuit of **sensual happiness** in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial;
- II. ...and the pursuit of **self-mortification**, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial.

Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to tranquility, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.

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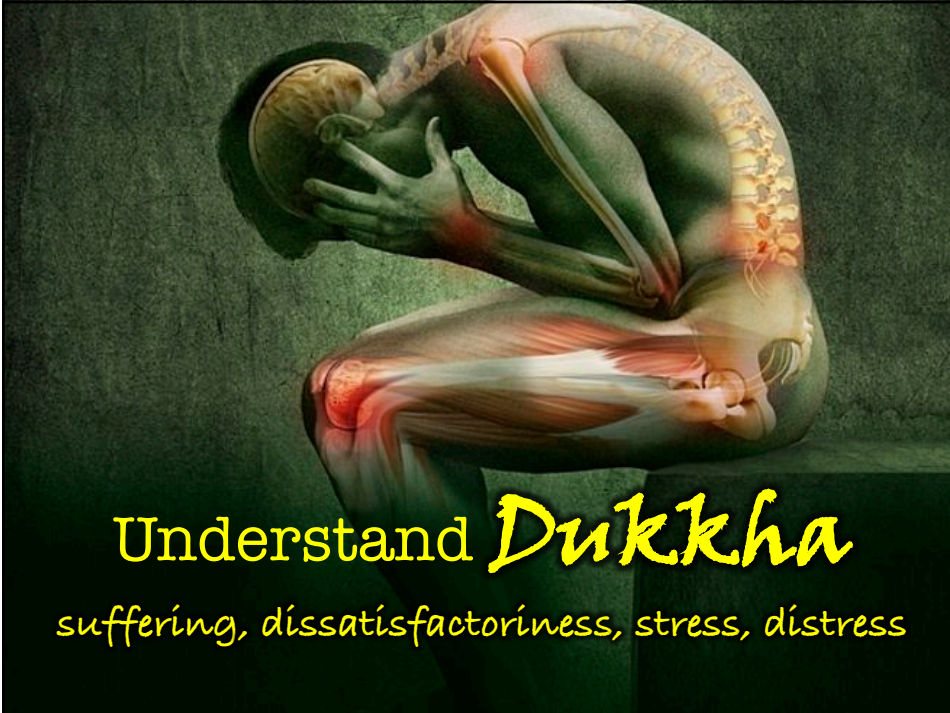
## THE TWO EXTREMITIES



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Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata has awakened to the **middle way**, which gives rise to **vision**, which gives rise to **knowledge**, which leads to **tranquility**, to **direct knowledge**, to **enlightenment**, to **Nibbana**.

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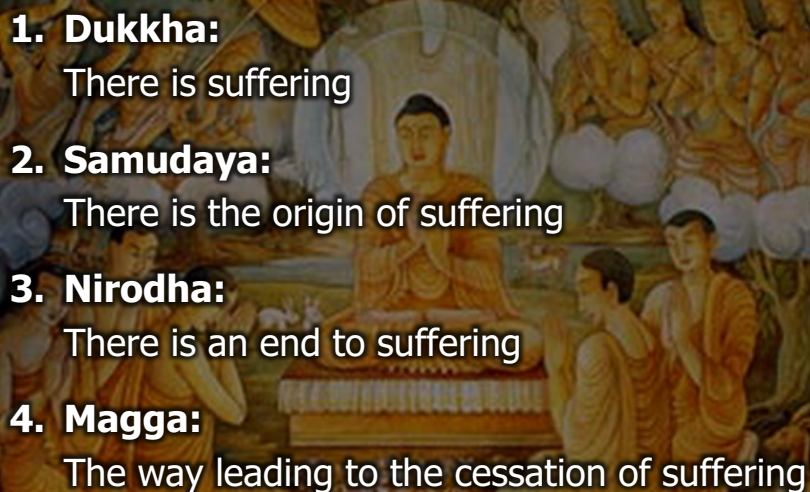



## Understand *Dukkha*

*suffering, dissatisfactoriness, stress, distress*




## DHAMMACAKKAPPAVATTANA SUTTA Setting into Motion the Wheel of Dhamma

- 
- 1. Dukkha:**  
There is suffering
  - 2. Samudaya:**  
There is the origin of suffering
  - 3. Nirodha:**  
There is an end to suffering
  - 4. Magga:**  
The way leading to the cessation of suffering





### THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH



**THERE IS SUFFERING (DUKKHA)**

- This is the noble truth of suffering: (1) **birth** is suffering, (2) **aging** is suffering, (3) **illness** is suffering, (4) **death** is suffering;
- (5) separation from what is **pleasing** is suffering;
- (6) union with what is **displeasing** is suffering;
- (7) not to get what one **wants** is suffering;
- in brief, (8) clinging to the **five aggregates** is suffering.

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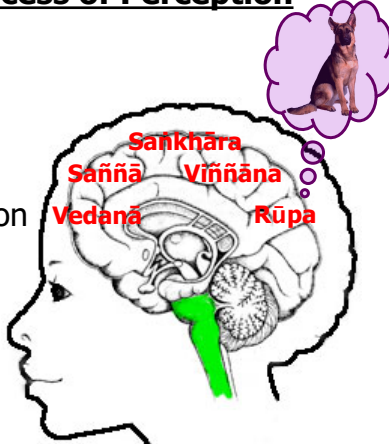


## THE PROCESS OF PERCEPTION



**PAÑCA-KHANDHA** (traditionally "the 5 aggregates")

**The 5 Constituents of the Process of Perception**

1. **Vedanā** – Feeling
2. **Saññā** – Sensation
3. **Saṅkhāra** – Mental Construction
4. **Viññāna** – Perception
5. **Rūpa** – Mental Image



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## THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH


**ORIGIN (CAUSE) OF SUFFERING (SAMUDAYA)**

- It is this **craving** which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there;
- that is, **craving** for sensual pleasures,
- **craving** for non-existence,
- **craving** for continued existence.

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- **craving** for non-existence,
- **craving** for continued existence.


**Lobha** –  
lust and greed  
for pleasures

**Dosa** –  
aversion and  
hatred towards  
displeasures


**Moha** –  
delusion of  
self-centered  
existence

**Tanhā** = **Emotional reactions** (“craving”)

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THE MIDDLE WAY
Page 13




## THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH




**THERE IS AN END TO SUFFERING (NIRODHA)**

- It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving,
- the giving up and relinquishing of it,
- freedom from it,
- non-reliance on it.

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Page 14



## THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH

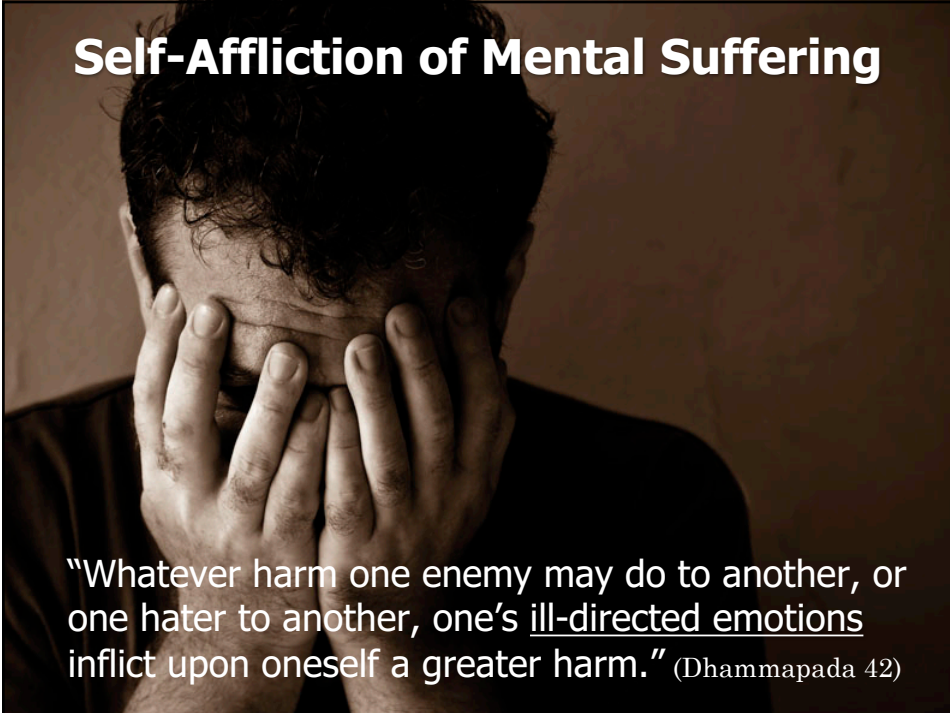


### THE WAY TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

❖ **Sublime Eightfold Way** (*Ariya atṭhaṅgika magga*):

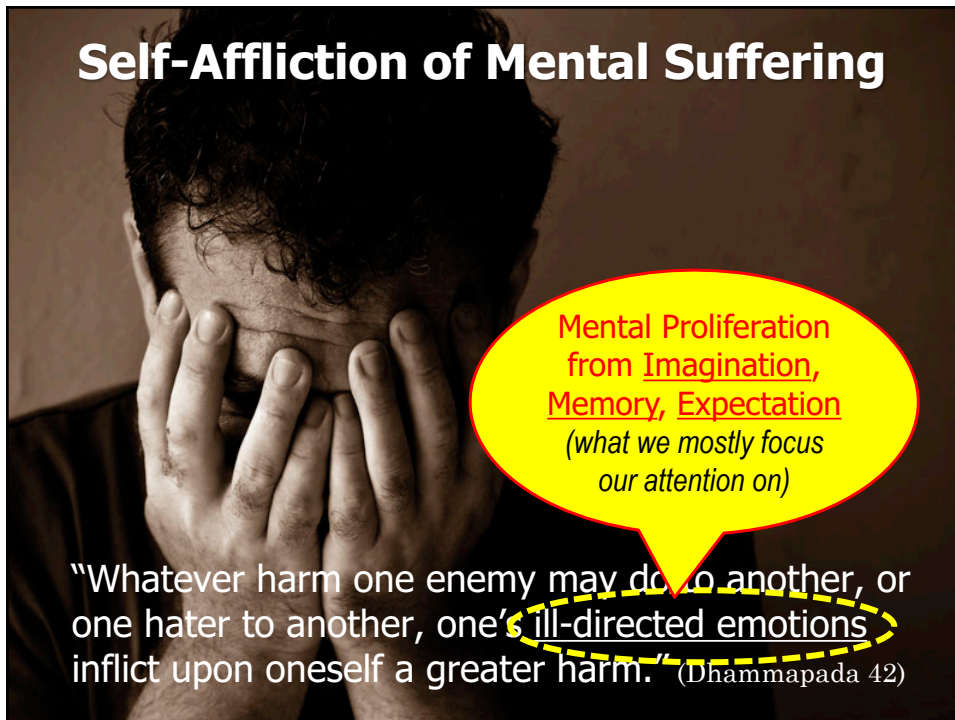
- ① **Sammā Diṭṭhi: Harmonious Perspective** ("Right View")
- ② **Sammā Sankappa: Harmonious Orientation** ("Right Intentions")
- ③ **Sammā Vācā: Harmonious Speech** ("Right Speech")
- ④ **Sammā Kammanta: Harmonious Action** ("Right Action")
- ⑤ **Sammā Ājīva: Harmonious Lifestyle** ("Right Livelihood")
- ⑥ **Sammā Vāyāma: Harmonious Exercise** ("Right Effort")
- ⑦ **Sammā Sati: Harmonious Attention** ("Right Mindfulness")
- ⑧ **Sammā Samādhi: Harmonious Equilibrium** ("Right Concentration")

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## Self-Affliction of Mental Suffering

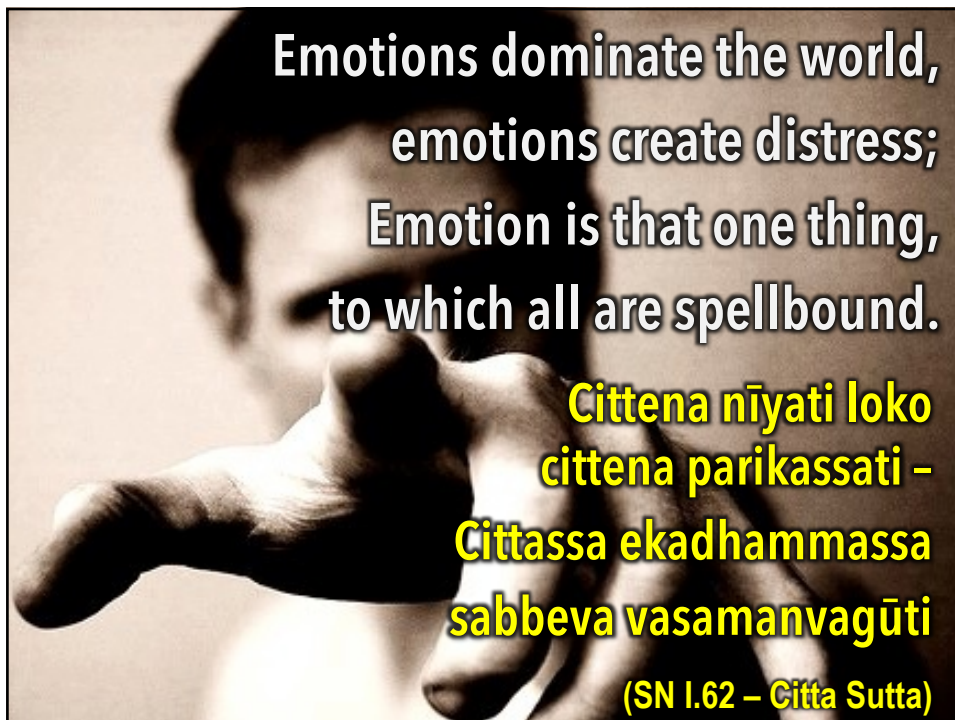
"Whatever harm one enemy may do to another, or one hater to another, one's ill-directed emotions inflict upon oneself a greater harm." (Dhammapada 42)



**Self-Affliction of Mental Suffering**

Mental Proliferation  
from Imagination,  
Memory, Expectation  
(what we mostly focus  
our attention on)

“Whatever harm one enemy may do to another, or one hater to another, one’s ill-directed emotions inflict upon oneself a greater harm.” (Dhammapada 42)




**Emotions dominate the world,  
emotions create distress;  
Emotion is that one thing,  
to which all are spellbound.**

**Cittena nīyati loko  
cittena parikassati –  
Cittassa ekadhammassa  
sabbeva vasamanvagūti**


(SN I.62 – Citta Sutta)





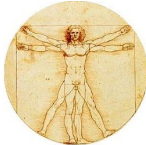


## MENTAL EXPERIENCE




### THREE PARTS OF MENTAL EXPERIENCES:


- **Viññāna** : **Process of Perception** ("perception")
  - what was perceived through the sense organs;
- **Mano** : **Cognitive Process** ("conception & intellect")
  - categorized interpretation of perception giving meaning to what was perceived;
- **Citta** : **Affective Process** ("emotion")
  - pleasant & unpleasant feelings arouse the emotions, leading to emotional excitement and reactions;
  - personalizing the experience leading to the notion of a self-centered existence (the "I.ME" syndrome).




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## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE




❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:



**STIMULUS**





- Eyes
- Ear
- Nose
- Tongue
- Body


**PERCEPTION**  
("Viññāna")

- ❖ SIGHT
- ❖ HEARING
- ❖ SMELL
- ❖ TASTE
- ❖ TOUCH


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THE MIDDLE WAY


Page 21




## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE




❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:



**STIMULUS**





- Eyes
- Ear
- Nose
- Tongue
- Body

**PERCEPTION**  
("Viññāna")

**COGNITIVE PROCESS**  
("Mano")

← "Papañca" →

← Re-cognition (dhamma) →

Categorized  
Memory of  
Fluid Past

**AFFECTIVE PROCESS**  
("Citta")

- PLEASANT
- UNPLEASANT
- NEUTRAL

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THE MIDDLE WAY

Page 22

**PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE**

❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:

The diagram illustrates a chain reaction starting with a "Stressor" (Tension In The Body) which leads to "PERCEPTION ('Viññāna')". This is followed by "COGNITIVE PROCESS ('Mano')", and then "AFFECTIVE PROCESS ('Citta')". The affective process leads to "Unconscious Emotional Arousal ('Tanhā')", which results in a "Bio-Chemical reaction in the body".

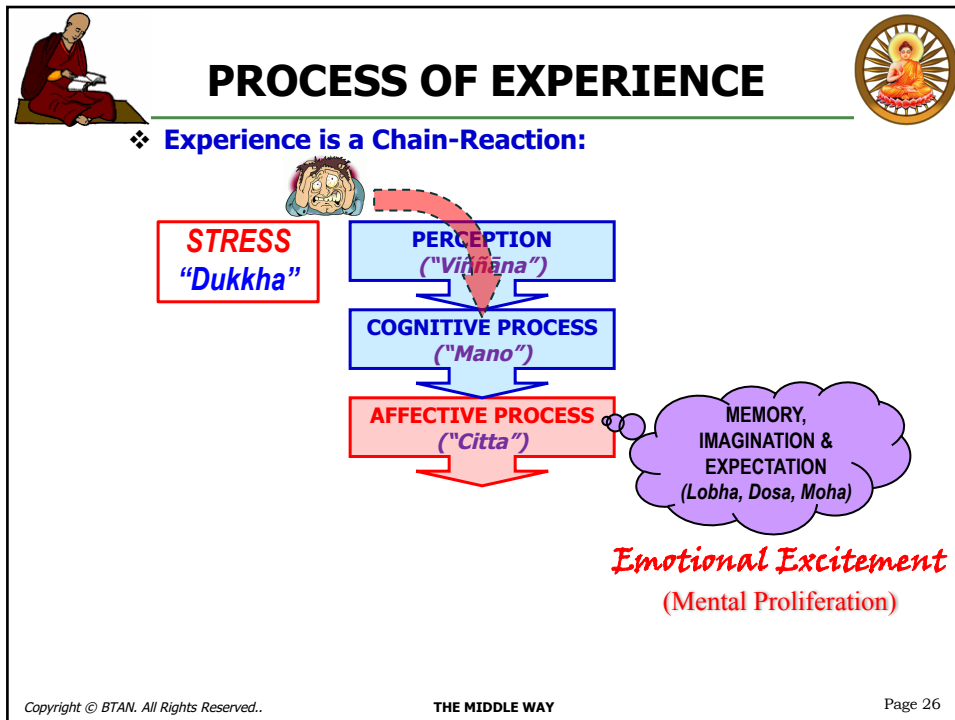
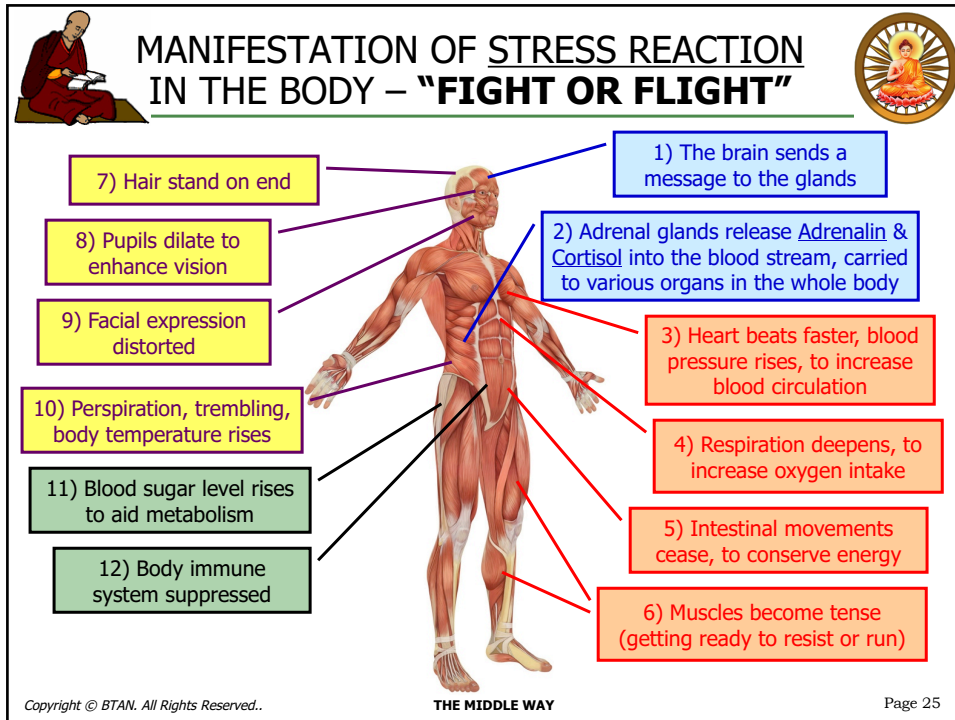
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**PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE**

❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:


The diagram illustrates a chain reaction starting with "PERCEPTION ('Viññāna')", followed by "COGNITIVE PROCESS ('Mano')", and then "AFFECTIVE PROCESS ('Citta')". This process leads to "STRESS 'Dukkha'" and "Physiological Disturbance (STRESS) 'Fight or Flight'".

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## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE




❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:

The diagram illustrates the process of experience as a chain reaction. It starts with **PERCEPTION ("Viññāna")** in a blue box, which leads to **COGNITIVE PROCESS ("Mano")** in a blue box. This then leads to **AFFECTIVE PROCESS ("Citta")** in a red box. To the left, a red box labeled **STRESS "Dukkha"** is connected to the cognitive process. To the right, a red box labeled **DISTRESS "Domanāsa"** is connected to the affective process. A purple cloud labeled **MEMORY, IMAGINATION & EXPECTATION (Lobha, Dosa, Moha)** has arrows pointing to the cognitive and affective processes. Below this cloud, the text **Emotional Excitement (Mental Proliferation)** is written in red. The flow is indicated by arrows: a blue arrow from Perception to Cognitive Process, a blue arrow from Cognitive Process to Affective Process, and a red arrow from Affective Process pointing downwards.

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## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE




❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:


This diagram is similar to the one on page 27 but includes a human figure on the left and a distressed face above the cognitive process. A red arrow points from the distressed face to the cognitive process. The flow remains: Perception (blue) to Cognitive Process (blue) to Affective Process (red), with a final red arrow pointing downwards. The cloud and text **Emotional Excitement (Mental Proliferation)** are also present.

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## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE



❖ **Experience is a Chain-Reaction:**

**PERCEPTION**  
("Viññāna")

**COGNITIVE PROCESS**  
("Mano")

**AFFECTIVE PROCESS**  
("Citta")

**Pause, Relax,  
& T.H.I.N.K.**

**Be conscious of bodily conditions:**

- Heat/Heatrate
- Breathing
- Forehead, Eyes, Face
- Jaw, teeth, tongue
- Neck & shoulders
- Arm, Hand, Fist
- Abdomen, Stomach
- Leg / Thigh / Calf
- Facial expression
- Vocal expression

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**THE MIDDLE WAY**

Page 29



## 3-STEP SELF-COMPASSION





### ❖ PAUSE

(allow time for emotional excitement & anxiety to calm down, and hormonal reactions to subside)



### ❖ RELAX

(take deep breaths, relax the body, and consciously compose the mind to respond)




### ❖ T.H.I.N.K.

(purposefully focus on wholesome & beneficial response to the problem)


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**THE MIDDLE WAY**

Page 30



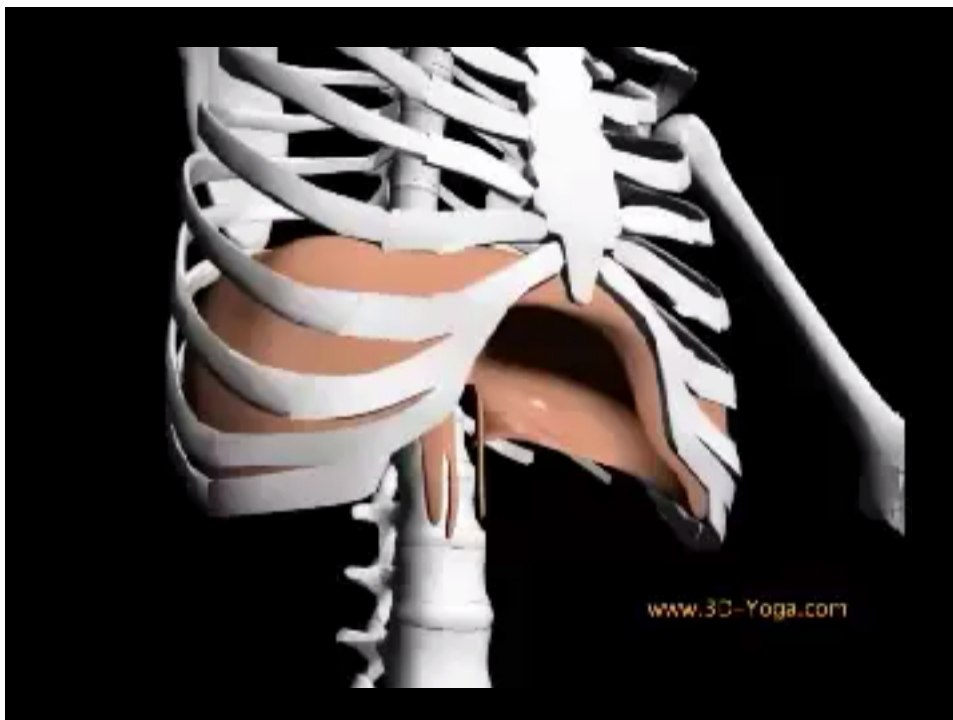
## MINDFUL BREATHING

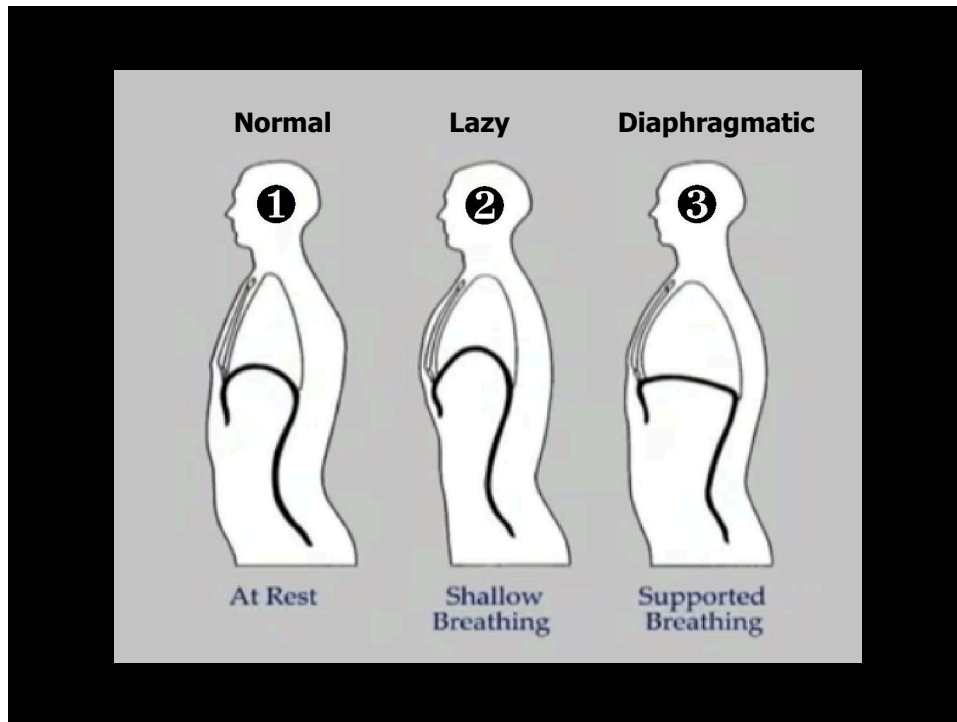




**Most critically overlooked relaxation tool!**  
**Easiest to relax the body & calm the mind.**

- a) Increases natural unforced oxygen intake;
- b) Stabilizes heart rate and blood pressure;
- c) Regulates body temperature and blood circulation;
- d) Restores and maintains homeostasis (stability);
- e) Calms the nervous system, indicating absence of threats.

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 **FREEDOM FROM MENTAL PROLIFERATION** 

1. RELAX THE BODY: *Conscious Relaxation*


- Bio-chemical activities gradually subside;
- Tension in the body eases;
- Mind no longer disturbed by tension in the body.

*A relaxed body is a necessary condition for a calm mind!*

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## FREEDOM FROM MENTAL PROLIFERATION




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  - Bio-chemical activities gradually subside;
  - Tension in the body eases;
  - Mind no longer disturbed by tension in the body.

*A relaxed body is a necessary condition for a calm mind!*
2. CALM THE MIND: *Introspective Attention*
  - Relaxed body suggests absence of threats;
  - Consciously focus attention on the present moment;
  - Mindful of body, feelings, emotions, and thoughts;
  - Stopping mental proliferation – mind calms down.

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## FREEDOM FROM MENTAL PROLIFERATION

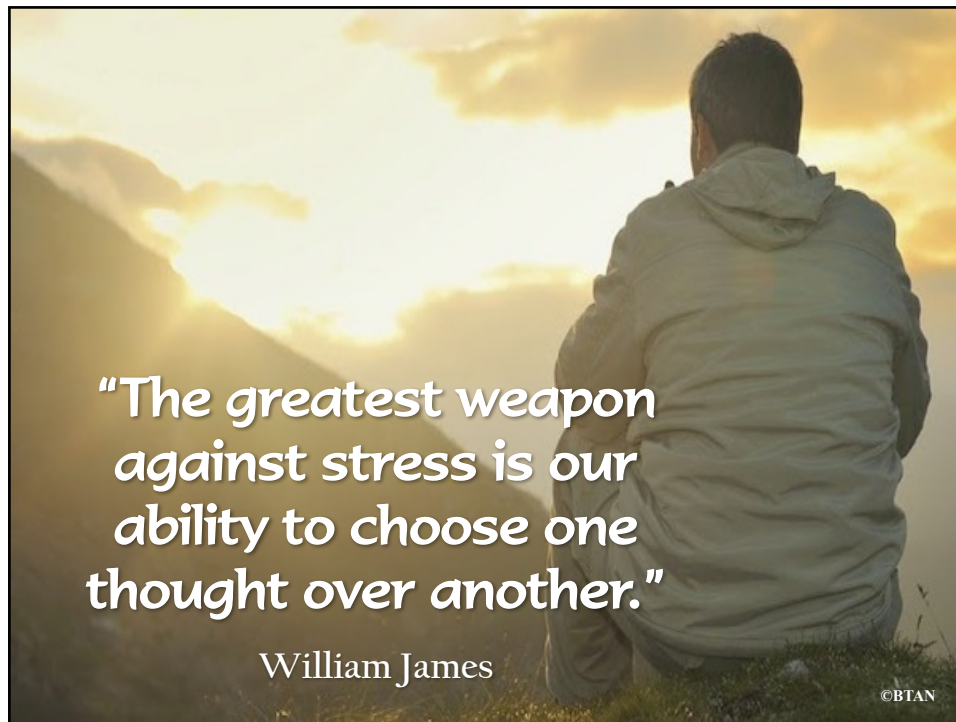




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  - Relaxed body suggests absence of threats;
  - Consciously focus attention on the present moment;
  - Mindful of body, feelings, emotions, and thoughts;
  - Stopping mental proliferation – mind calms down.

*Breaking the Bio-chemical chain-reaction*  
*Avoiding Emotional Excitements from Sensory Perceptions, Memory, Imagination & Expectation.*

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 **WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY** 

By remaining calm and relaxed, we have 3 “windows of opportunities” to overcome stress:


1. Do something to change our circumstances;
2. Change the way we perceive our circumstances (perspective);
3. Change how we respond to our circumstances.

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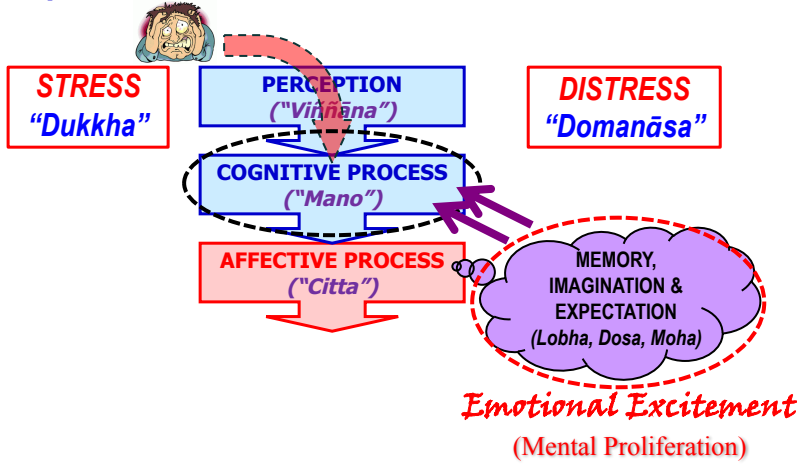




## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE




❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:




The diagram illustrates the process of experience as a chain reaction. It starts with **PERCEPTION ("Viññāna")**, which leads to **COGNITIVE PROCESS ("Mano")**. This cognitive process then leads to **AFFECTIVE PROCESS ("Citta")**, which results in **Emotional Excitement (Mental Proliferation)**. A cloud labeled **MEMORY, IMAGINATION & EXPECTATION (Lobha, Dosa, Moha)** is shown to influence the cognitive process. The process is framed by **STRESS "Dukkha"** on the left and **DISTRESS "Domanāsa"** on the right.

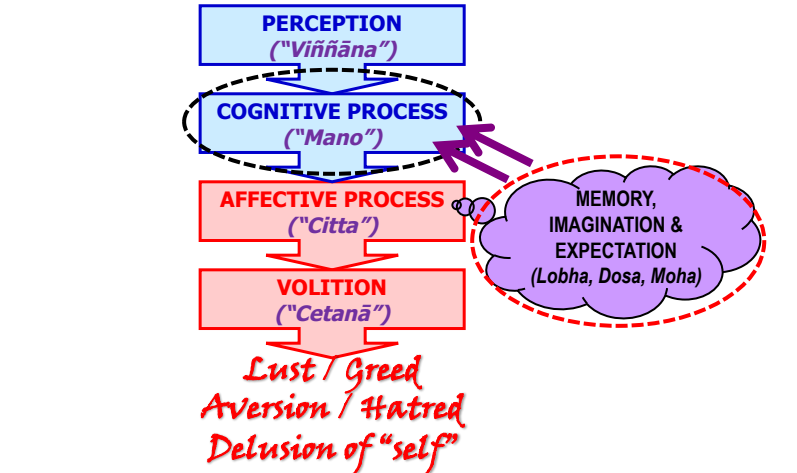
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## PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE

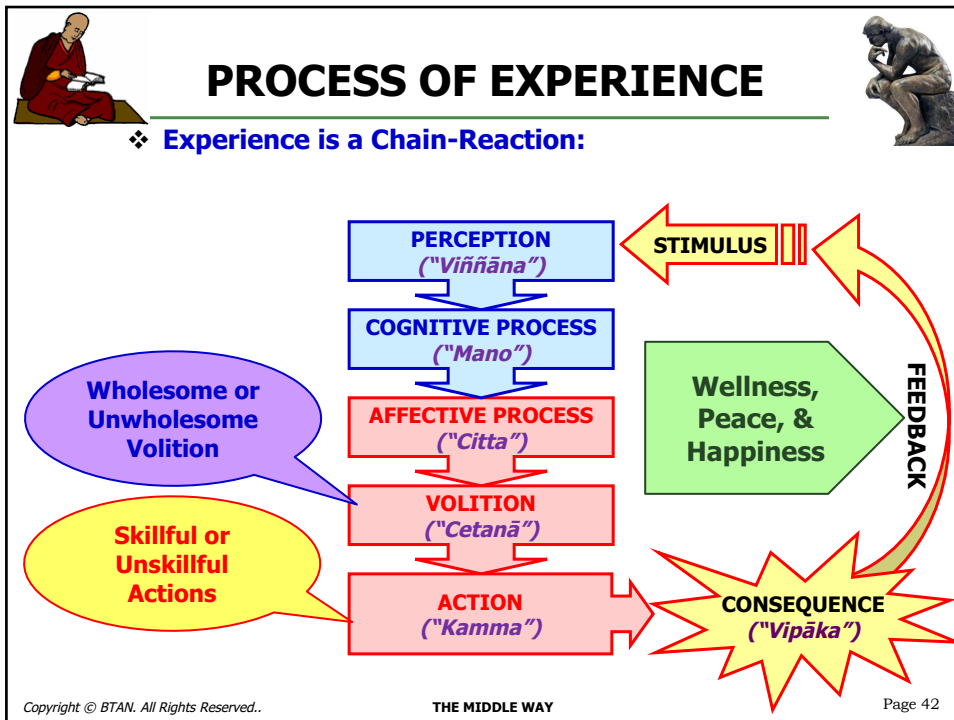
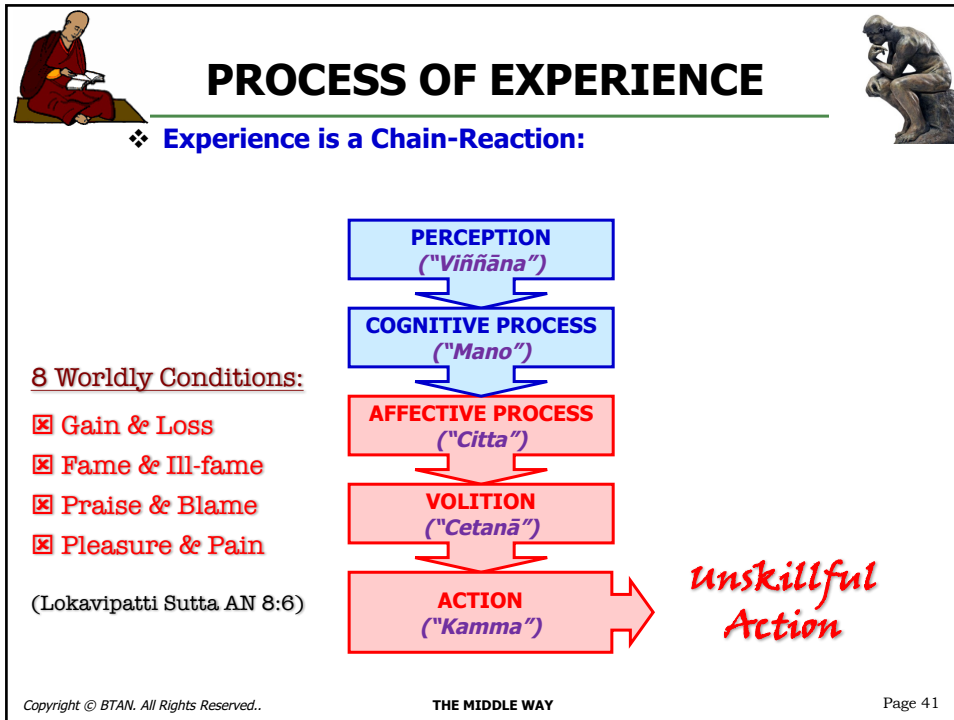


❖ Experience is a Chain-Reaction:



The diagram illustrates the process of experience as a chain reaction. It starts with **PERCEPTION ("Viññāna")**, which leads to **COGNITIVE PROCESS ("Mano")**. This cognitive process then leads to **AFFECTIVE PROCESS ("Citta")**, which results in **VOLITION ("Cetanā")**. This volition leads to **Lust / Greed, Aversion / Hatred, and Delusion of "self"**. A cloud labeled **MEMORY, IMAGINATION & EXPECTATION (Lobha, Dosa, Moha)** is shown to influence the cognitive process.

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**Sublime Eightfold Way**

**Harmonious Perspective**  
"Right View"  
(Sammā Dīṭṭhi)

**Harmonious Equilibrium**  
"Right Concentration"  
(Sammā Samādhī)

**Harmonious Attention**  
"Right Mindfulness"  
(Sammā Sati)

**Harmonious Exercise**  
"Right Effort"  
(Sammā Vāyāma)

**Harmonious Lifestyle**  
"Right Livelihood"  
(Sammā Ājīva)

**Harmonious Orientation**  
"Right Intentions"  
(Sammā Sankappa)

**Harmonious Speech**  
"Right Speech"  
(Sammā Vācā)

**Harmonious Action**  
"Right Action"  
(Sammā Kammanta)

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**Sublime Eightfold Way**

**Harmonious Perspective**  
"Right View"  
(Sammā Dīṭṭhi)

**Paññā**  
(wisdom)

**Harmonious Equilibrium**  
"Right Concentration"  
(Sammā Samādhī)

**Harmonious Attention**  
"Right Mindfulness"  
(Sammā Sati)

**Harmonious Exercise**  
"Right Effort"  
(Sammā Vāyāma)

**Harmonious Lifestyle**  
"Right Livelihood"  
(Sammā Ājīva)

**Harmonious Orientation**  
"Right Intentions"  
(Sammā Sankappa)

**Harmonious Speech**  
"Right Speech"  
(Sammā Vācā)

**Harmonious Action**  
"Right Action"  
(Sammā Kammanta)

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**Sublime Eightfold Way**

Harmonious Perspective  
"Right View"  
(Sammā Diṭṭhi)

Harmonious Orientation  
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(Sammā Vācā)

Harmonious Exercise  
"Right Effort"  
(Sammā Vāyāma)

Harmonious Action  
"Right Action"  
(Sammā Kammanta)

Harmonious Lifestyle  
"Right Livelihood"  
(Sammā Ājīva)

**Sīla**  
(morality)

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**Sublime Eightfold Way**

Harmonious Perspective  
"Right View"  
(Sammā Diṭṭhi)

Harmonious Orientation  
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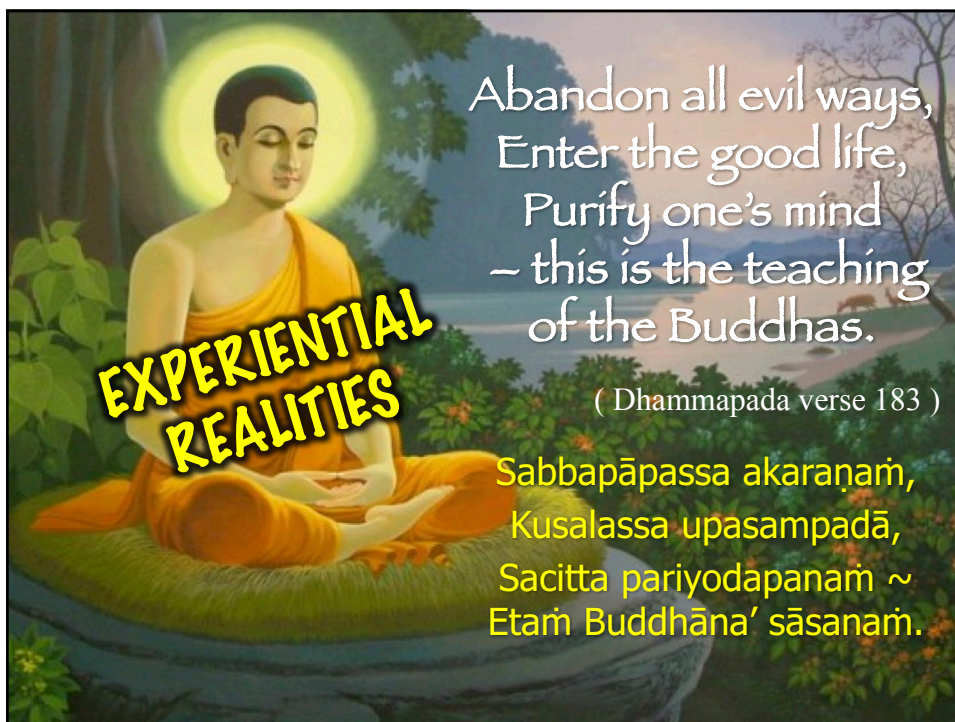
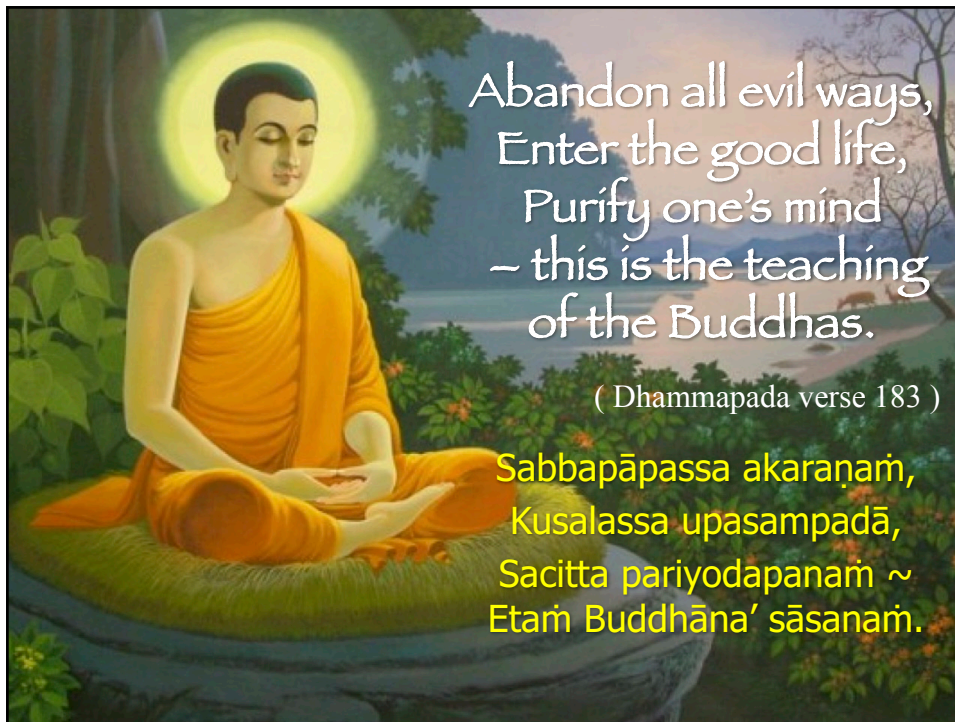
Harmonious Exercise  
"Right Effort"  
(Sammā Vāyāma)

Harmonious Action  
"Right Action"  
(Sammā Kammanta)

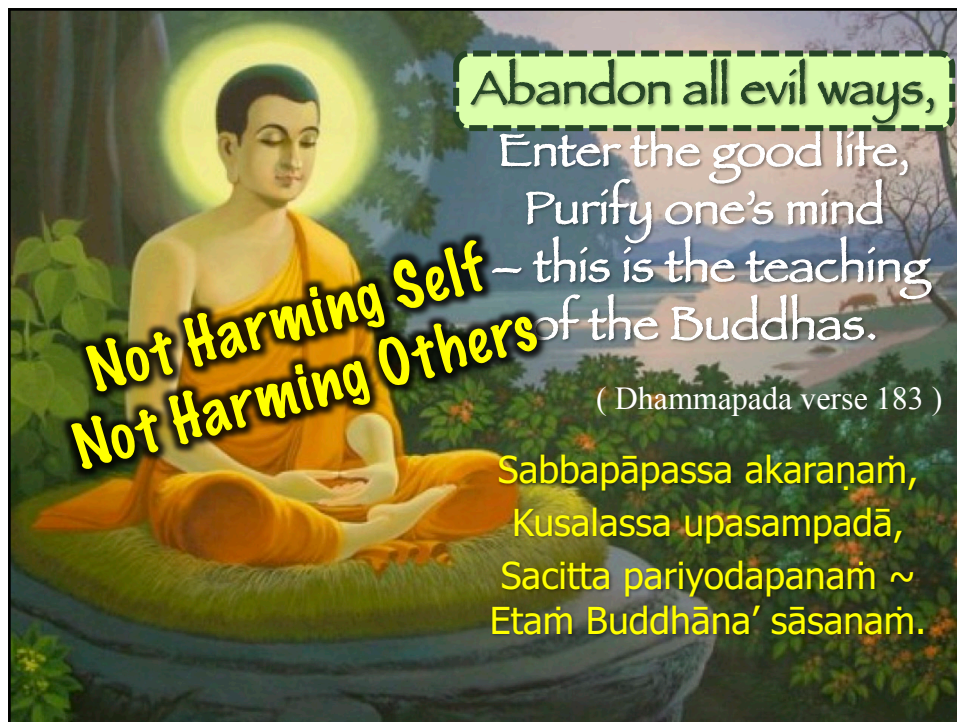
Harmonious Lifestyle  
"Right Livelihood"  
(Sammā Ājīva)

**Samādhī**  
(tranquility)

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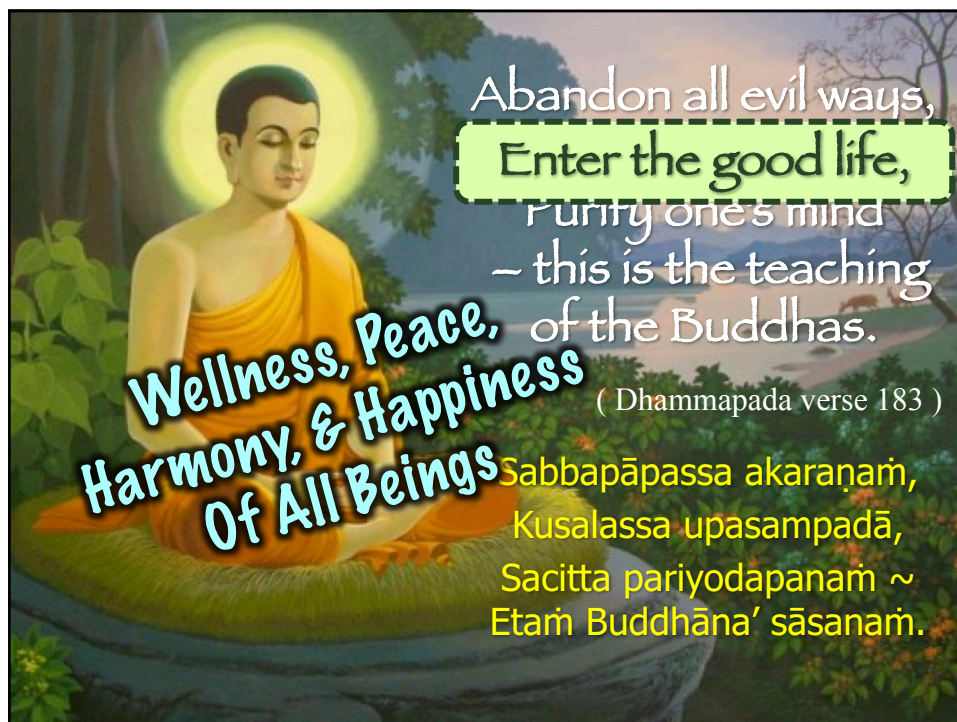




**Abandon all evil ways,**  
Enter the good life,  
Purify one's mind  
~ this is the teaching  
of the Buddhas.  
( Dhammapada verse 183 )

**Not Harwing Self  
Not Harwing Others**

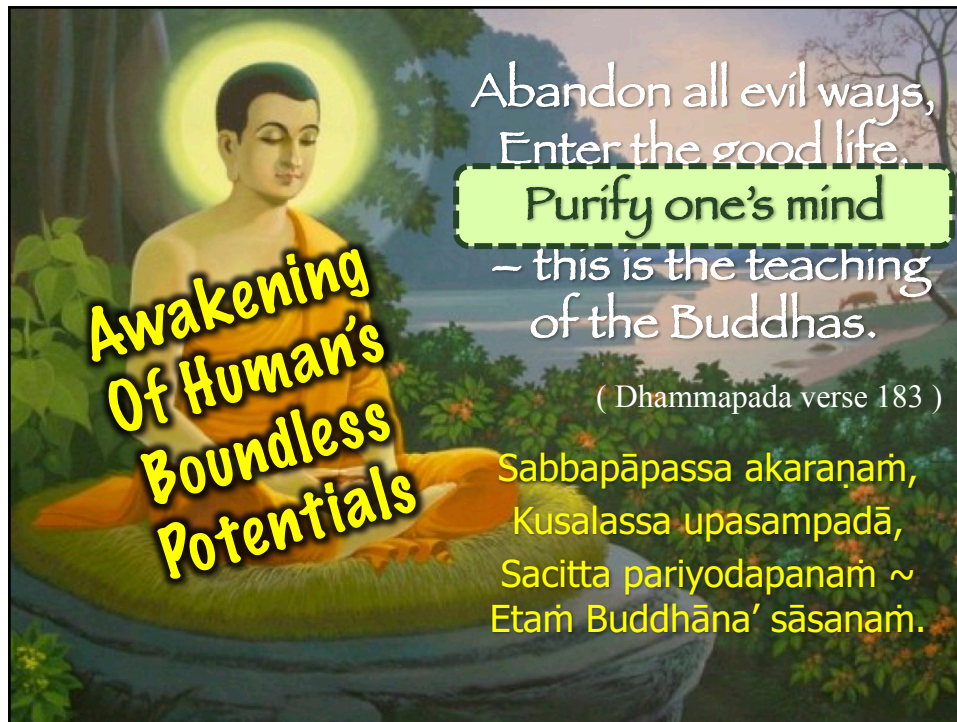
Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ,  
Kusalassa upasampadā,  
Sacitta pariyodapanam ~  
Etaṃ Buddhāna' sāsanam.



Abandon all evil ways,  
**Enter the good life,**  
Purify one's mind  
~ this is the teaching  
of the Buddhas.  
( Dhammapada verse 183 )

**Wellness, Peace,  
Harmony, & Happiness  
Of All Beings**

Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ,  
Kusalassa upasampadā,  
Sacitta pariyodapanam ~  
Etaṃ Buddhāna' sāsanam.



**Awakening  
Of Human's  
Boundless  
Potentials**

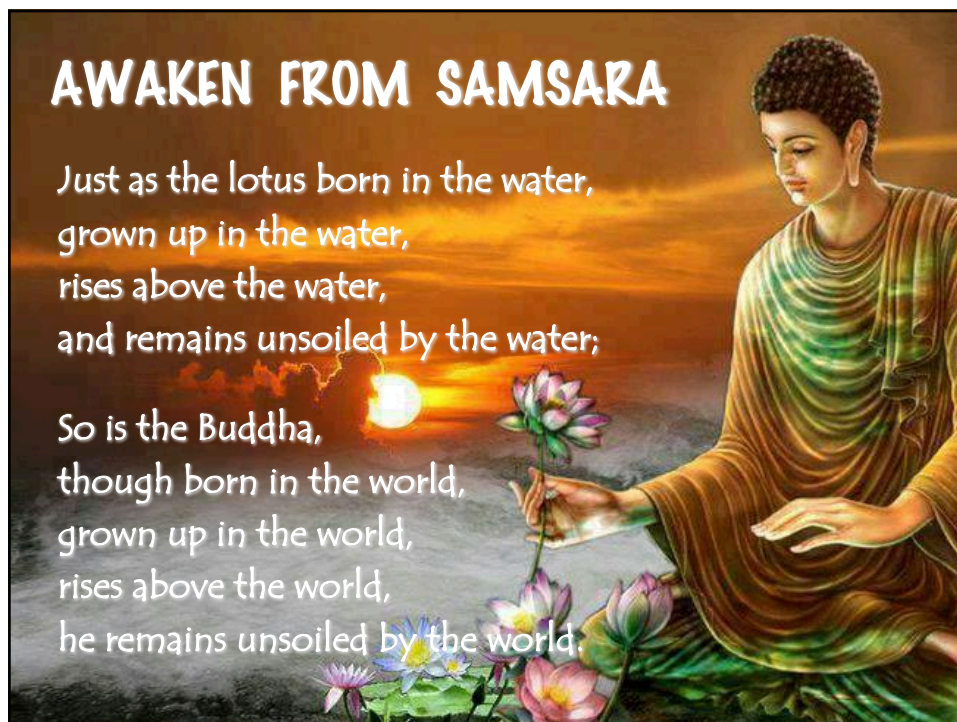
Abandon all evil ways,  
Enter the good life.

**Purify one's mind**

~ this is the teaching  
of the Buddhas.

( Dhammapada verse 183 )

Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ,  
Kusalassa upasampadā,  
Sacitta pariyodapanāṃ ~  
Etaṃ Buddhāna' sāsanaṃ.



## AWAKEN FROM SAMSAKA

Just as the lotus born in the water,  
grown up in the water,  
rises above the water,  
and remains unsoiled by the water;

So is the Buddha,  
though born in the world,  
grown up in the world,  
rises above the world,  
he remains unsoiled by the world.



